12: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
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often wanders from village to village, hanging his hammock in the men's houses and acquainting himself with available girls. If one meets his fancy, he generally enters into a casual liaison with her and then asks her father and mother for permission to marry. If they consider him to be a serious person and a good worker, permission is usually granted. The young man does not always represent himself but frequently returns home to ask his father to speak in his behalf. Marriages are occasionally contracted for the children by the parents; this practice is less common than it was in the past, as the decreased importance of the extended family has made marriage increasingly an individual affair rather than a bond between kin groups. 584

No special observances of either a ceremonial or an economic nature precede the marriage. If the young man was a resident of another village, he comes to the bride's village bearing his hammock, arms and personal possessions and installs himself in the men's house. If he is from the same village as the bride, which is less frequently the case, he makes no change at all in his living arrangements. The groom merely brings fish and game to his bride, and not to the house of his mother. The provision of the wife with food is the central symbolic act in marriage. Both mythology and real life abound with cases in which the young man who is determined to leave his wife, openly and deliberately refuses to give her his day's kill; this effectively constitutes divorce. 585 586

Mundurucú marriages become consolidated by time and children. Couples who have been married several years commonly show great devotion to each other. But the union tends to be brittle in its early period. The membership of the husband and wife in the men's house and the dwelling house, respectively, and the patterns of collectivism in consumption give the couple a degree of economic in- 581

dependence from each other that is not conducive to marital stability. The husband may leave with little difficulty, and frequently does. The wife's lack of mobility makes it more difficult for her to break the marriage on her own initiative, but if the groom incurs the displeasure of the father-in-law, he is often told to leave. The divorced man either returns to his native village or wanders in search of another wife.

That the stability of Mundurucú marriages depends primarily upon the growth of affective bonds between the mates and a common interest in their children gives us a certain insight into the workings of the social system. There has recently been some discussion on the relation of marital stability to mode of descent and types of social unit, as revealed by comparative analysis of some selected African societies.[16] These have shown that marriage tends to be more enduring in patrilineal than in matrilineal groups and that this tendency is even more pronounced when the bride is incorporated into the membership of her husband's kin group. The Mundurucú are interesting just because they do not conform typologically to the African examples. Despite formal patrilineality, marriage is matrilocal and the man is thrust into affiliation with a cohesive unit of related kinswomen. His wife's primary loyalties are to her household; the husband's remain with the relatives of his natal household. The husband initially has no deep commitment to the wife's household and is under no strong influence to remain if he experiences difficulties with his wife or her kin. Thus far, the Mundurucú approximate the Hopi, for example, with the important exception that the latter are matrilineal also. In matrilineal-matrilocal societies of the Hopi type, every man maintains continuing rights and duties within his matrilineage, and these ties

[16] *Cf.* Gluckman, 1950; Schneider, 1953; Fallers, 1957.

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operate to the detriment of integration within the wife's household. Among the Mundurucú, however, there is no matrilineage (or patrilineage), and a man is bound to his natal household primarily by affect. As his own group of brothers becomes dispersed in matrilocal residence and his parents die, such emotional ties become correspondingly attenuated. From the point of view of social structure, the process by which he is integrated into his new matrix, however loosely, is reinforced by the gradual attrition of bonds of the old; and as part of the same process, his marriage becomes more stable. We see then that Mundurucú matrilocality contributes to the brittleness of marriage in its early phase, but the lack of corporate, bounded lineages leads in time to the strengthening of the connubial tie. Later sections will explore more completely the position of the married couple and the nuclear family within the larger framework of social life.

Adultery is common and a frequent source of strife between mates, but generally results in divorce only when the wife is promiscuous. The men regard their own adulterous escapades as highly amusing incidents, but take a far less lenient view when cuckolded. An offended husband may beat his wife or harangue her, but no direct physical action is taken against the guilty male. The woman whose husband is unfaithful has little recourse except to chastise him verbally and, as one female informant said, "go out and do the same thing myself."

Adultery causes few open conflicts among the Mundurucú, but it is a chronic source of ill feeling. To a certain extent, latent hostility probably contributes to adultery. One of the more amusing episodes of our field trip was the plight of the trader-appointed, and thoroughly hated, chief Biboi, of the village of Cabitutú. Biboi had two wives, one in Cabitutú and the other in Cabruá. The

Husband and wife occa-
594 sionally go to the gardens for the ostensible purpose of
[833] digging yams, but the true purpose of these occasions is almost invariably amorous. Each man is, however, responsible for providing his own family with those necessities of life that must be obtained in trade. A good husband clothes
[581] his wife and children, provides them with trinkets, and buys tools. These items are occasionally provided for other members of the extended family, especially unmarried women and their children, but it is recognized that a man's primary responsibilities in these matters are to his own wife and children. The individualizing tendency of rubber production and trade, is thus an important factor in distinguishing the nuclear family as a social unit. Otherwise, the organization of village and household activities and the ease of divorce make it quite weak.

593 The Mundurucú are devoted parents and bestow a great deal of affection and attention on their offspring. How-
[855] ever, children are frequently placed in the care of the mother's sisters or mother, or left with a young girl of the household when the mother is busy or out of the village. The children, like children in most societies with extended
[866] families, derive security from a number of persons and may place dependency on a wide range of people.

857 The roles of boys and girls among the Mundurucú an-
868 ticipate their future positions in life. Girls begin to join in the work of the females at an early age, starting with baby tending and later helping in farinha manufacture. They accordingly tend to spend much time in and around their houses and are gradually incorporated into the economy of the matrilocal extended family, in which presumably they will also spend their adult life.

[562] The boys, on the other hand, are given the greatest freedom. They wander from house to house and play in the village or in the neighboring savannah and under-

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177 797 the mission throughout their lives wholly renounce native belief.

The priests have had considerably more success in encouraging a positive attitude toward rubber collection and in fostering productivity as a prestige index. This is not true on the savannahs, where production is more narrowly linked to the obligation of the client to the patron and to the acquisition of needed goods. On the Cururú, however, it is more common to hear a person characterized as "lazy" or as "a good worker" with special reference to rubber collecting. The women make such statements more often than the men, for the value of a woman's possessions and therefore her status in the new scale of female values depends on the amount of rubber her husband collects. Thus, the Cururú woman does not want to marry a "lazy" man and especially does not want a campineiro, who is more likely to be a disinterested rubber tapper and less inclined to help his wife in what he considers to be woman's work.

177 461 [562] [556] [581]

The rubber trade on the Cururú is monopolized by the mission and the government Indian post. The bulk of the Mundurucú population on the Cururú River lives upstream from the mission, and since the Indian post is situated near the mouth of the river it is at a serious disadvantage in the competition between the two for the trade and, thereby, control of the Indians. The post lost influence also because of widespread dislike of the agent then in charge. Therefore, the mission today enjoys the greater Indian patronage and has been the more important agency in the introduction of Western culture.

439 797 648 [177]

Both the Indian post and the mission trade with the Indians on the basis of the barter-credit system which prevails throughout the region. During the dry season, rubber is traded, and farinha is bought during the winter rains. The Indians make occasional visits to the two agen-

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